

Frequently Asked Questions Staff Services Analyst (GENERAL)

1. What are the new minimum qualifications for the Staff Services Analyst (SSA) classification?

Pattern I requires a four year Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Pattern II requires four years of State service and six semester or nine quarter units of college in specified subjects.

2. What is the interpretation of "State service" as used in Pattern II of the minimum qualifications?

An appointment to any permanent civil service classification which was obtained through the civil service merit examination process. "State service" does not include time served in temporary, seasonal, and/or student assistant position.

3. What type of Bachelor's degree is required?

Any Bachelor's degree will qualify a candidate to take the open SSA examination.

4. Will SPB verify the minimum qualifications that candidates enter into the online application system?

No. Departments must verify that an eligible meets minimum qualifications prior to hire, including verification of education.

5. Will departments require official sealed college transcripts?

No. Eligibles may present an original of an unofficial transcript to the hiring department. The hiring department will make a copy of the transcript for their files. Eligibles can also present their Bachelor's degree to verify that they meet the Pattern I education requirement. Departments will make a copy of the degree for departmental files. Departments should not accept copies of college transcripts or college degrees which are made by the eligible.

6. What type of open exam is being administered?

It is an Internet based Life Experience Questionnaire (LEQ).

7. How do candidates apply to take the open LEQ examination?

The application and examination is available on SPB's Website at www.spb.ca.gov.

8. What time of day can candidates access the online application and examination? Is it available on weekends?

The examination is available 24 hours a day, seven days week.

9. How long does it take for candidates to obtain their results?

The system is set up to provide instant scoring and candidates will immediately receive an online results notice.

10. How many ranks are created under the new LEQ open exam process (i.e., 6, 9, etc.)?

The examination creates a six rank list, with the possibility of nine ranks due to veterans' preference points.

11. What is the list eligibility period for the open test?

12 months.

12. Do candidates still have to be reachable on the open eligible list in order to be appointed to an SSA position?

Yes, he/she must be in the top three (3) ranks of the eligible list. The established merit principles for State civil service testing and hiring still apply.

13. What is the retest period for the open examination?

12 months, regardless of whether a candidate passes or fails the examination.

14. If a candidate took and failed the former SSA exam six months ago, can he/she take the new open examination?

Yes. All open candidates, regardless of their scheduled retake date, may take the new open examination.

15. Is there a study guide for the new SSA test?

No. The test is a Life Experience Questionnaire which asks questions regarding the candidates' training and experience. Candidates will be able to download and print a copy of the test questions prior to completing the examination online.

16. Have the requirements to transfer to SSA changed?

No, the California Code of Regulations, Sections 430-435 transfer rules still apply.

17. Can departments continue to administer their own SSA transfer process?

No, all departments must use SPB's transfer examination for all transfers to SSA.

18. If a candidate took and passed the former written open SSA examination, but was not reachable, does he/she have to retake the written exam in order to transfer to the SSA classification?

This depends on when the candidate took the written exam. SPB will maintain a database with the results of all candidates that took the prior SSA written test during the period of 2000 through July 31, 2007. Since the requirement for transfer is to successfully pass the SSA written test, departments can verify whether a candidate previously passed or failed the written test. If the prior score file

indicates that the transfer candidate passed the written test, the hiring department can use those results to transfer the candidate to the SSA class, as long as the transfer meets all of the transfer rules.

19. How long will the results from the new SSA transfer exam remain valid?

Results from the new SSA transfer exam will be valid indefinitely for those who pass the test.

20. Will there be more than one SSA transfer exam?

No. Departments may only use SPB's SSA transfer exam.

21. Can any qualified employee take the SSA transfer examination?

Yes.

22. What kind of SSA transfer test is being administered?

Candidates take a standardized written examination.

23. How do candidates sign up for the SSA transfer exam?

Candidates may contact their department's personnel office to make arrangements to take the examination.

24. Can candidates take the SSA transfer exam online?

No. Candidates must appear in person to take the examination in a controlled test setting overseen by an Exam Proctor.

25. Is there a study guide for the SSA transfer exam?

No. However, departments will be provided with information on the content of the exam which they can provide to candidates to assist in preparing for the examination.

26. How is the SSA transfer exam scored?

The exam is pass/fail. Previously, candidates had to pass each of the three sections on the written examination. Candidates will no longer be required to pass each of the individual sections; rather, they will be required to achieve one overall pass point.

27. Who is responsible for scoring the SSA transfer exam?

Each department will score the paper/pencil exam and notify the candidates of the test results. The departments will be responsible for entering the names of successful and unsuccessful candidates into the prior score file.

28. How long does it take candidates to receive their results from the pencil/paper administration of the SSA transfer exam?

Results should be provided to SSA transfer candidates within 5-7 business days of the test date.

29. What is the retake period for the SSA transfer examination?

12 months.

30. How will departments know if a candidate is eligible to retake the SSA transfer exam?

Departments must check the prior score file before scheduling candidates for the SSA transfer exam. If a candidate has taken the SSA transfer exam within the previous 12 months, they cannot be scheduled until the 12 months has expired. While the candidate's current department may not have administered the SSA transfer exam to the candidate, the candidate could have taken the exam at another department so it is imperative that all departments check the prior score file. SPB's prior score file will list all transfer results indefinitely.

31. If a candidate took a transfer exam in the past which was administered by his/her own department or by another State agency, will his/her results still be valid?

No, the candidate will need to take the SPB SSA transfer examination to maintain eligibility to transfer to the SSA class.

32. Does abolishment of the SSA open list affect the use of department promotional lists?

Departments do not have promotional lists for the SSA class. Departments are not authorized to test on a promotional basis for SSA. However, if the “promotional” list is a reference to a department’s transfer examination, then it will have an impact. All employees who want to utilize the transfer route to the SSA classification must take SPB’s SSA transfer exam, and/or participate in the open examination if they meet the minimum qualifications.

33. If an employee wants to transfer to the SSA classification and his/her current salary will not change upon transfer, does he/she still need to take the transfer exam?

Yes. Under the new process, all employees seeking transfer to the SSA class must take SPB’s SSA transfer exam.

34. If an employee’s department will not administer the SSA transfer exam to the employee, can the employee take the transfer exam at another department?

Yes.

35. What are the changes to the Alternate Range Criteria?

Eligibles who possess a Bachelor’s degree are eligible to be appointed to Range C upon appointment to the SSA class. Also, those eligibles who have six months experience as a Management Services Technician, Range B, are eligible for appointment to SSA, Range B.

36. If a candidate takes the new SSA Life Experience Questionnaire will he/she be appointed to Range C?

Only if the eligible has a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university.

37. Can a candidate be appointed to Range C if he/she has a two year Associate's degree?

No, only those eligibles with a Bachelor's degree can be placed in Range C upon appointment.

38. How did departments know to change affected employees to Range C on August 1, 2007? Did departments require proof of their employees' Bachelor's degrees? If so, what documentation?

The State Controller's Office has released Pay Letter 07-03 (Issue Date: July 30, 2007) to all departments regarding the change to the Alternate Range Criteria. Personnel offices should notify all SSA's of the change and ensure that all range changes are processed. However, it is incumbent on affected employees to notify their personnel office that they have a Bachelor's degree, or verify that their personnel office is aware of their Bachelor's degree. Departments will require employees to submit their diploma, or present their college transcripts which note that a Bachelor's degree was awarded. Departments should make a copy of the degree or transcripts for the employee's personnel file. If an employee was hired from the open SSA list, and qualified for the exam with a college degree, his/her personnel office should have retained a copy of the appropriate documents in the employee's personnel file.

39. If a current SSA transferred into the SSA class, but has a college degree, should that SSA have moved to Range C on August 1, 2007?

Yes. All SSA's who possess a Bachelor's degree were eligible to be appointed to Range C effective August 1st, regardless of how they entered the class.

40. If an SSA transferred into the SSA class, but earns their college degree after to August 1, 2007, will they immediately move to Range C when their degree is awarded?

Yes. Once an employee attains a college degree, he/she meets the criteria to be appointed to Range C.

41. What happens to employees who are on a Training and Development (T & D) assignment to the SSA class? Some T & D's were promised that they would be able to transfer to the SSA class after they successfully completed their T & D assignment?

In the past, the method of testing varied greatly from department to department. Under the new process, the testing and transfer process will be standardized and all employees seeking a transfer to SSA will be required to take the same test - SPB's written SSA transfer exam. This will apply to all employees who are on T & D assignments to the SSA class. If the employee meets the minimum qualifications for the LEQ, he/she can also take that examination.

42. If an employee is currently on a T & D assignment, will they be required to take the SSA open or transfer exam?

Yes. Serving a T & D assignment as an SSA does not automatically qualify an employee for an appointment to the SSA class.

43. If an employee serves a T & D assignment, and has a college degree, will he/she be appointed to Range C?
Frequently Asked Questions Page 7

Yes. However, the employee must pass the open examination and be reachable, prior to appointment, or pass the SSA transfer exam (for those employees who meet the transfer rules).

44. Can departments still use the Management Services Technician

Yes. The new process strongly encourages the use of the MST class to bridge employees from clerical to professional; however, it does not mandate it as the only function of the MST class.

45. What happens to Limited Term (LT) SSA's when their LT is over?

Since the current list abolishment, LT SSAs no longer have list eligibility for a permanent appointment. As a result, LT SSAs will need to take the new examination in order to maintain their list eligibility.

46. If an employee who meets Pattern II of the minimum qualifications, and who is also within transfer range, takes the new LEQ open examination but does not score in a reachable rank, do they still have to take the SSA transfer exam to lateral to the class?

Yes.

47. If a person resigned from an SSA position and wants to reinstate, do they have to take the open or transfer exam?

No. This person has indefinite permissive reinstatement rights to the SSA class.

48. If a department has used the SSA open list as an appropriate to fill vacancies in another classification, can the department still do that with the new process?

If it meets the criteria under the law, the department can continue to use the SSA list as an appropriate. When requesting an appropriate list, however, departments will need to follow the same process to verify minimum qualifications used for SSA appointments.

49. What is the last day that departments can process paperwork to appoint eligibles to the SSA classification from the former open eligible list, or on a transfer basis without the written examination?

A commitment to hire must have been made before the former SSA eligible list was abolished on August 1, 2007. The eligible's actual start date must have been within 30 days of August 1, 2007. The same rule applies to transfer candidates. Law enforcement departments will be allowed additional time due to fingerprint requirements prior to hire. The appointment date for law enforcement departments who require fingerprint clearance for the SSA class

must be within 30 days of the fingerprint clearance date.

50. What happens when someone wants to transfer from a higher classification to the SSA classification? Do they have to take the open or transfer test?

Yes, all transfers to SSA from another classification require passing the SSA transfer examination regardless of the applicant's previous level in State service.

51. Can a candidate take both tests – the SSA open examination and the transfer exam?

Yes.

52. What if a transfer or open candidate needs reasonable accommodation?

Open candidates should contact SPB to make arrangements. Transfer candidates should contact the department that is administering/scheduling their transfer examination.